SUPERMAN
ACTION COMICS
790
JUN 02
KRYPTO
UNLEASHED!
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WHAT... ? NO KISS FOR YOUR BESTEST OL' PALLY PAL GUY GARDNER?
NOT EVEN THE SECRET J.L.A. HANDSHAKE?
GEE.. AND HERE I TOOK A NICE LONG BATH IN THE BLOOD OF THE INNOCENT AND EVERYTHING.

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SUPERMAN created by SIEGEL & SHUSTER

Doomed Planet Krypton. The rocket. A child. Journey across cold space. Earth. Smallville. Crash landing. The Kents. Learns TRUTH. JUSTICE and THE AMERICAN WAY. Faster than a Speeding Bullet. Stronger than a Locomotive. A Man can fly. Believe.
SUPERMAN IN ACTION COMICS!
SOME PEOPLE JUST GOT NO LOVE FOR THE DEAD.
BUT SOME PEOPLE ARE GONNA LEARN TO LOVE...
BECAUSE I DIDN'T THROW THIS LITTLE REUNION TOGETHER SO I COULD GET DISSED IN MY HOUSE.

MAN & BEAST

Idyllic Planet Krypton. The visitor. Journey between dimensions. Earth. Fortress. Kelex. Learns LOYALTY. OBEDIENCE and RESPECT FOR PUBLIC PROPERTY. Faster than a Streaking Cat. Stronger than a Comet. A Dog can fly. Woof.
KRYPTO IN ACTION COMICS!

PART 2

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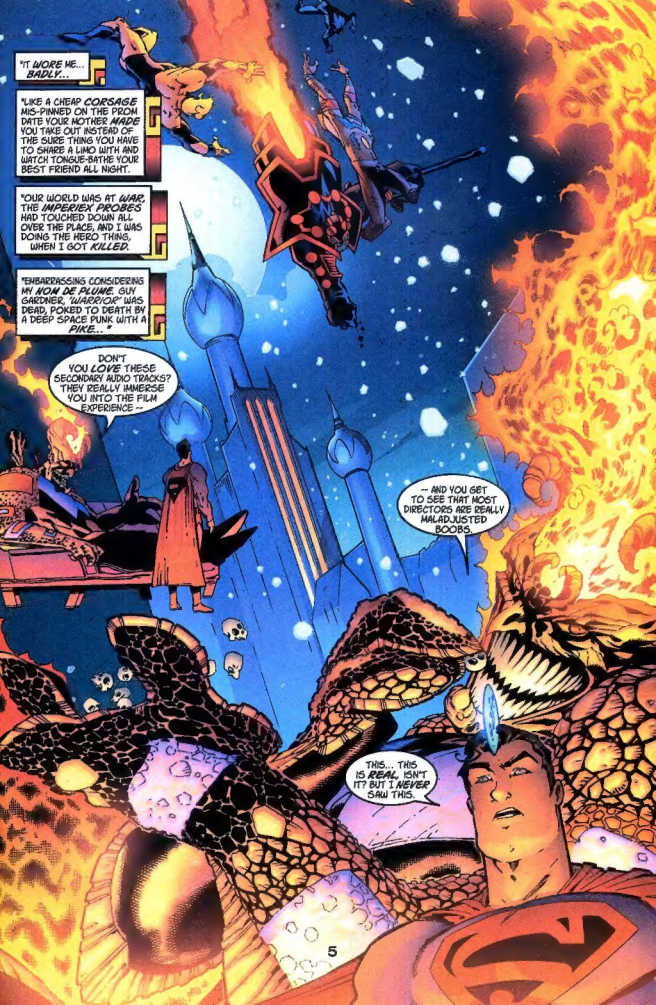
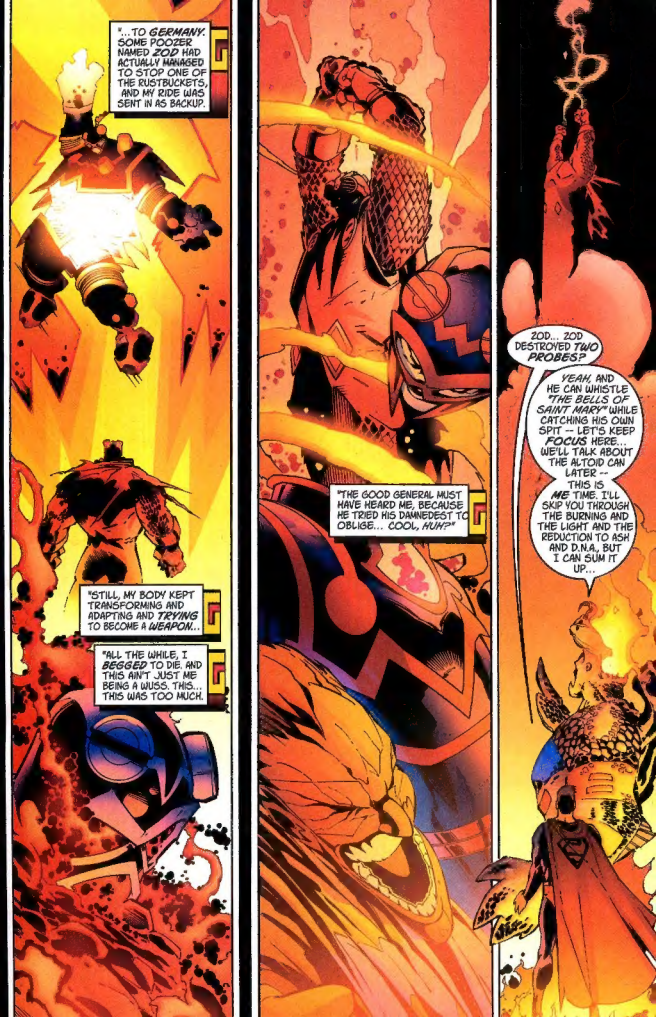
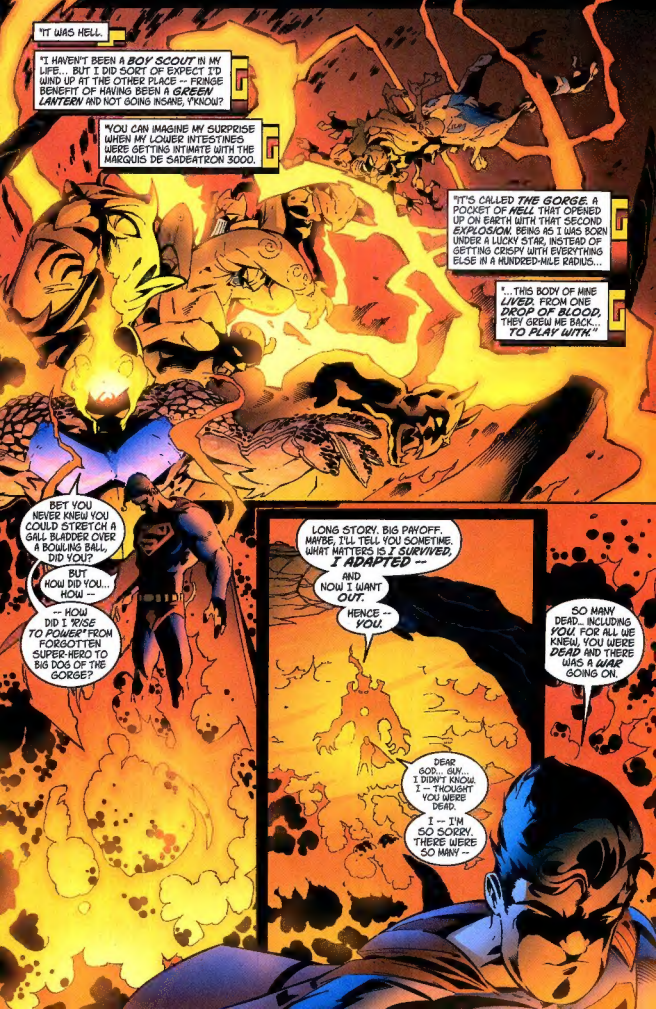
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL YOU ARE OR WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE -- -- BUT GUY GARDNER WAS A FRIEND, AND I'LL BE DAMNED IF I LET YOU DEFILE HIS MEMORY.
ZAK
YIPE!
YOU KNOW, IF I WAS AN ANGEL, YOU'D BUY THIS HOOK, LINE AND SINKER. YOU'RE AN ANTI-SATANITE. YOU KNOW THAT? YOU'RE RACIST AGAINST DEMONS.
THAT'S OKAY. I STILL HATE YOU WITH EQUAL PASSION.
AS TO MY MEMORY, IT'S BETTER THAN EVER. YOU REMEMBER THAT BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR BLUE BEETLE, WHEN WE :WHISPER WHISPER: --
-- AND THEN MARTIAN MANHUNTER GOT LOOPED ON CHOCOS AND DARED YOU TO -- :WHISPER WHISPER: --
-- AND YOU DID IT, BUT ONLY IF YOU COULD WEAR YOUR CAPE --
OH MY GOD, YOU'RE GUY GARDNER.
DEMONNNN! THIS WAS NOT THE ARRANGEMENNNT! YOU PROMISED --
AH-AH, KANCER, WE HAVE TO DO SOME GUY TALK NOW. GO ON, EVISCERATE SOMETHING UNTIL DADDY GETS BACK.
WE'RE GONNA WATCH A DVD -- "DEMONIC VIDEO DISC." THE EXTRAS ARE TO DIE.
GLLLFGGH!


"IT WORE ME... BADLY..."
"LIKE A CHEAP CORSAGE MIS-PINNED ON THE PROM DATE YOUR MOTHER MADE YOU TAKE OUT INSTEAD OF THE SURE THING YOU HAVE TO SHARE A LIMO WITH AND WATCH TONGUE-BATHE YOUR BEST FRIEND ALL NIGHT."
"YOUR WORLD WAS AT WAR, THE IMPERIEX PRIMES HAD TOUCHED DOWN ALL OVER THE PLACE, AND I WAS DOING THE HERO THING, WHEN I GOT KILLED."
"EMBARRASSING CONSIDERING MY NOM DE PLUME GUY GARDNER, 'WARRIOR' WAS DEAD, POKED TO DEATH BY A DEEP SPACE PUNK WITH A PIKE..."
DON'T YOU LOVE THESE SECONDARY AUDIO TRACKS? THEY REALLY IMMERSE YOU INTO THE FILM EXPERIENCE --
-- AND YOU GET TO SEE THAT MOST DIRECTORS ARE REALLY MALADJUSTED BOOBS.
THIS... THIS IS REAL, ISN'T IT? BUT I NEVER SAW THIS.

"DEAD. OR AT LEAST I WAS MOSTLY DEAD. VULDARIAN GENES -- THE D.N.A. THAT TAKES A LICKING AND THEN BITES YOUR TONGUE OUT -- SAW TO IT THAT I STAYED IN THE GAME A BIT LONGER.
"MY BODY WOULD NOT DIE, AND KEPT ADAPTING NEW AND DISGUSTING WAYS TO SURVIVE, STUCK TO THE IMPERIEX PROBE.
"I FELT IT ALL.
"FELT MY BODY BREAK. DIE. RE-FORM. FLATTEN. TEAR. RIP. BLEED. MEND.
"IT WAS ONE HELL OF A PARTY... IF I'D BEEN DRUNK, MAYBE IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO BAD.
"BUT I DIDN'T HAVE A MOUTH, OR HANDS, OR A LIVER, SO BEER WOULD HAVE GONE TO WASTE. INSTEAD, ALL I HAD WAS AWARENESS...
"... AND THE PAIN. AND NO ONE -- NO ONE CAME LOOKING FOR ME.
"THIS CONTINUED EVERY HOUR OR SO UNTIL I VAGUELY RESEMBLED THE UGLY COUSIN OF ROADKILL WHEN FINALLY THE PROBE GOT CALLED AWAY..."
I... IF THIS IS TRUE, I -- I DIDN'T KNOW -- NO ONE --
NO ONE TOLD YOU, RIGHT. WHO COULD? THE REST OF THE RESERVES WERE DOWN. MY VOCAL CORDS WERE HANGING FROM A CHURCH STEEPLE IN KUSHNAGOK --
-- NO BIGGIE. KEEP WATCHING, YOU'LL LIKE THIS PART.


"...TO GERMANY. SOME POOZER NAMED ZOD HAD ACTUALLY MANAGED TO STOP ONE OF THE RUSTBUCKETS, AND MY RIDE WAS SENT IN AS BACKUP.
"STILL, MY BODY KEPT TRANSFORMING AND ADAPTING AND TRYING TO BECOME A WEAPON..
"ALL THE WHILE, I BEGGED TO DIE. AND THIS AIN'T JUST ME BEING A WUSS. THIS... THIS WAS TOO MUCH.
"THE GOOD GENERAL MUST HAVE HEARD ME, BECAUSE HE TRIED HIS DAMNEDEST TO OBLIGE... COOL, HUH?"
ZOD... ZOD DESTROYED TWO PROBES?
YEAH, AND HE CAN WHISTLE "THE BELLS OF SAINT MARY" WHILE CATCHING HIS OWN SPIT -- LET'S KEEP FOCUS HERE... WE'LL TALK ABOUT THE ALTOID CAN LATER --
THIS IS ME TIME. I'LL SKIP YOU THROUGH THE BURNING AND THE LIGHT AND THE REDUCTION TO ASH AND D.N.A., BUT I CAN SUM IT UP...


"IT WAS HELL.
"I HAVEN'T BEEN A BOY SCOUT IN MY LIFE... BUT I DID SORT OF EXPECT I'D WIND UP AT THE OTHER PLACE -- FRINGE BENEFIT OF HAVING BEEN A GREEN LANTERN AND NOT GOING INSANE, Y'KNOW?
"YOU CAN IMAGINE MY SURPRISE WHEN MY LOWER INTESTINES WERE GETTING INTIMATE WITH THE MARQUIS DE SADEATRON 3000.
"IT'S CALLED THE GORGE. A POCKET OF HELL THAT OPENED UP ON EARTH WITH THAT SECOND EXPLOSION. BEING AS I WAS BORN UNDER A LUCKY STAR, INSTEAD OF GETTING CRISPY WITH EVERYTHING ELSE IN A HUNDRED-MILE RADIUS...
"...THIS BODY OF MINE LIVED. FROM ONE DROP OF BLOOD. THEY GREW ME BACK... TO PLAY WITH."
BET YOU NEVER KNEW YOU COULD STRETCH A GALL BLADDER OVER A BOWLING BALL, DID YOU?
BUT HOW DID YOU... HOW --
-- HOW DID I 'RISE TO POWER' FROM FORGOTTEN SUPER-HERO TO BIG DOG OF THE GORGE?
LONG STORY. BIG PAYOFF. MAYBE, I'LL TELL YOU SOMETIME. WHAT MATTERS IS I SURVIVED. I ADAPTED --
AND NOW I WANT OUT.
HENCE -- YOU.
SO MANY DEAD... INCLUDING YOU FOR ALL WE KNEW. YOU WERE DEAD AND THERE WAS A WAR GOING ON.
DEAR GOD... GUY... I DIDN'T KNOW. I -- THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.
I -- I'M SO SORRY. THERE WERE SO MANY --

I DID NOT DIE!
YOU LEFT ME BEHIND!
HOW! MANY FUNERALS DID YOU ATTEND?! HOW MANY TEARS DID YOU SHED --
-- AND YOU "FORGOT" ME?!
YOU LEFT ME IN HELL!
LEAVE HIMMMM ALONE, DEMON!
HE ISSSS MINE!

UH-UH, FREAK. YOU'RE IN MY HOUSE. MY RULES.
I'M THROUGH PLAYING GAMES.
I DIDN'T CLAW MY WAY THROUGH A SEA OF VOMIT AND BROKEN GLASS TO "GET A LITTLE HELP FROM MY SO-CALLED FRIENDS."
I HAVE A PLAN.
YOU'RE IT.
SO AM I.
WHATEVER'S HAPPENED, WE CAN HELP YOU. GUY. DR. FATE. ZATANNA -- THERE MUST BE A WAY!
I'M ALL POWERFUL IN THE GORGE, BUT WHUPTIE DO -- I CAN'T LEAVE -- AND I'M A @!#* DEMON!
BUT THERE IS A WAY OUT, IF SOMEONE STEPS UP TO THE PLATE AND WILLINGLY TAKES MY PLACE --
YOU.

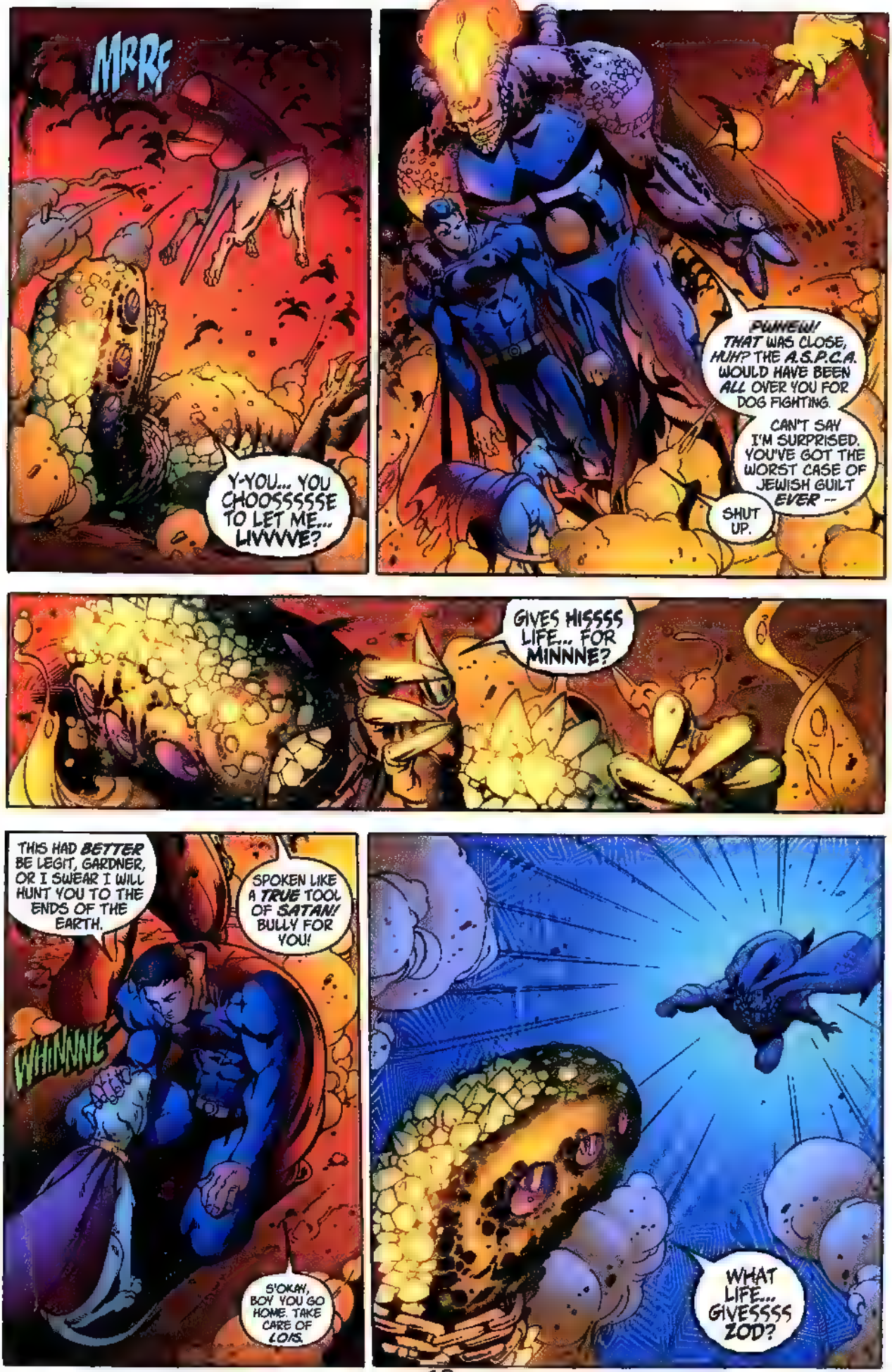
I GOT THE IDEA LAST TIME YOU CAME TO VISIT SUNNY, FOKOLISTAN, AND RISKED YOUR OWN NECK TO SAVE HAMARO.
HE ISN'T EVEN HARDLY A LIVING THING, BUT STILL YOU WENT THAT EXTRA MILE TO SAVE HIM -- BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT YOU DO.
I SENT THE ABORTION TO ROUND YOU UP -- KNEW YOU COULDN'T RESIST, ESPECIALLY IF YOU THOUGHT HE COULD LEAD BIG BAD ZOD TO YOUR DOORSTEP.
THE POOR LITTLE STINKER ACTUALLY THINKS YOU CAN LOVE HIM. I TRIED TO TELL HIM OTHERWISE, THAT YOU ABANDON PEOPLE -- THAT YOU FORGET THE UNLOVED --
BUT HE'S STILL YOUNG, AND I DIGRESS...
YOU OWE ME.
YOU HAVE TO SIT IN MY THRONE AND STRAP YOURSELF IN, AND BECOME THE NEW GUARDIAN OF THE GORGE.
TAKE MY PLACE.
AND IF I DON'T?
WELL, THEN I GUESS THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO, IS THERE ? YOU AND I'LL HANG OUT, DRINK SOME BREW, LAUGH ABOUT MY KOOKY SCHEME...
RIGHT AFTER YOU KILL KAMOSEA, OF COURSE
WHAT?!
YOU HAVE TO 'CAUSE IF YOU DON'T -- HE'LL GO RIGHT BACK TO GENERAL HAPPY PANTS WITH THE SCENT AND VISUAL AND CURRENT LOCATION OF YOUR LADY LOVE.
AND SHE'LL BE BREAKFAST BY LUNCHTIME.

YOU WOULDN'T DARE!
COME ON! ISN'T THAT WHY YOU CAME HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?!
TO PUT AN END TO THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL
IT'S THE CONSOLATION PRIZE IF YOU TURN DOWN MY OFFER. AND BY THE BY...
YOU HAVE THREE MINUTES TO MAKE YOUR DECISION
*GENERAL ZOD IS AT THE FRONT DOOR. HE'S COME LOOKING FOR KANCER AND THE NASTY LITTLE HOLE THAT'S BEEN SPITTING OUT DEMONS ALL OVER HIS COUNTRY
*BLING IS PRETTY TOUGH DESPITE LOOKING LIKE A MASS OF ALL THE HELLSPAWN I CAN SEND OUT OF THE GORGE, HE'S THE MOST SELF-IMPROVED.
*HE GOT OVER HIS FEAR OF HEAT VISION AFTER YOUR RUN-IN WITH HIM, SUPES, SO HE SHOULD KEEP THE GENERAL OCCUPIED FOR A LITTLE WHILE
*UNTIL HE DOESN'T
*AND HE FINDS YOU AND HIS LAP DOG HERE
AND THE BEANS GET SPILLED ALL OVER METROPOLIS.

"YOU KNOW I'M NOT LYING IF ZOD LEARNS WHAT KANCER KNOWS, IT'S OVER."
HOW CAN YOU DO THIS? YOU YOU USED TO BE A HERO.
HEH. SYLVANN. YOU REALLY MEAN IT WHEN YOU SAY IT.
THERE'S A REASON JESUS WEPT, PAL.
IT WASN'T BECAUSE HE WANTED TO KILL EVERY ONE OF THOSE JERKS WHO SPIT ON HIM WHILE HE HUNG ON THE CROSS
HE'D HAVE SOLD HIS OWN MOTHER TO GET DOWN FROM THERE. FOR ABOUT HALF A SECOND THING IS, HE REMEMBERED HE HAD THE BIG GUY BACKING HIM UP..
I HAD A DIFFERENT SPONSOR.
UGHH!
IT WASN'T THE ADULATION OF FANS WATCHING HIS GOOD WORKS GOING DOWN THE TOILET
THIS IS HELL, MY FRIEND YOU SUFFER HERE. NO MATTER HOW GOOD YOU ARE OUTSIDE, IN HERE
WE'RE ALL SINNERS

"MAN AND BEAST ALIKE.
PHWAM
GRRRR
"LIKE SUPER-DOGGY OVER HERE... DEFENDING HIS MASTER'S HONOR.
RRROAR
"EVEN IF HE HAS TO KILL TO DO IT.
THERE'S NO "TRICK" TO GET OUT OF THIS, SUPERMAN. NO BUCKET OF WATER YOU CAN TOSS ON ME TO MAKE ME GO AWAH.
TAKE MY PLACE ON THE THRONE OR KILL KANCER OR REFUSE TO MAKE A DECISION AND LET YOUR DOG DO IT FOR YOU.
KNOW THIS, IF YOU TAKE OVER THE GORGE, YOU BECOME ALL POWERFUL WITHIN IT.
YOU CAN MAKE SURE KANCER FORGETS EVERYTHING IT LEARNED IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
AND THE SUPER-BONUS IS YOU GET TO KILL ZOD.

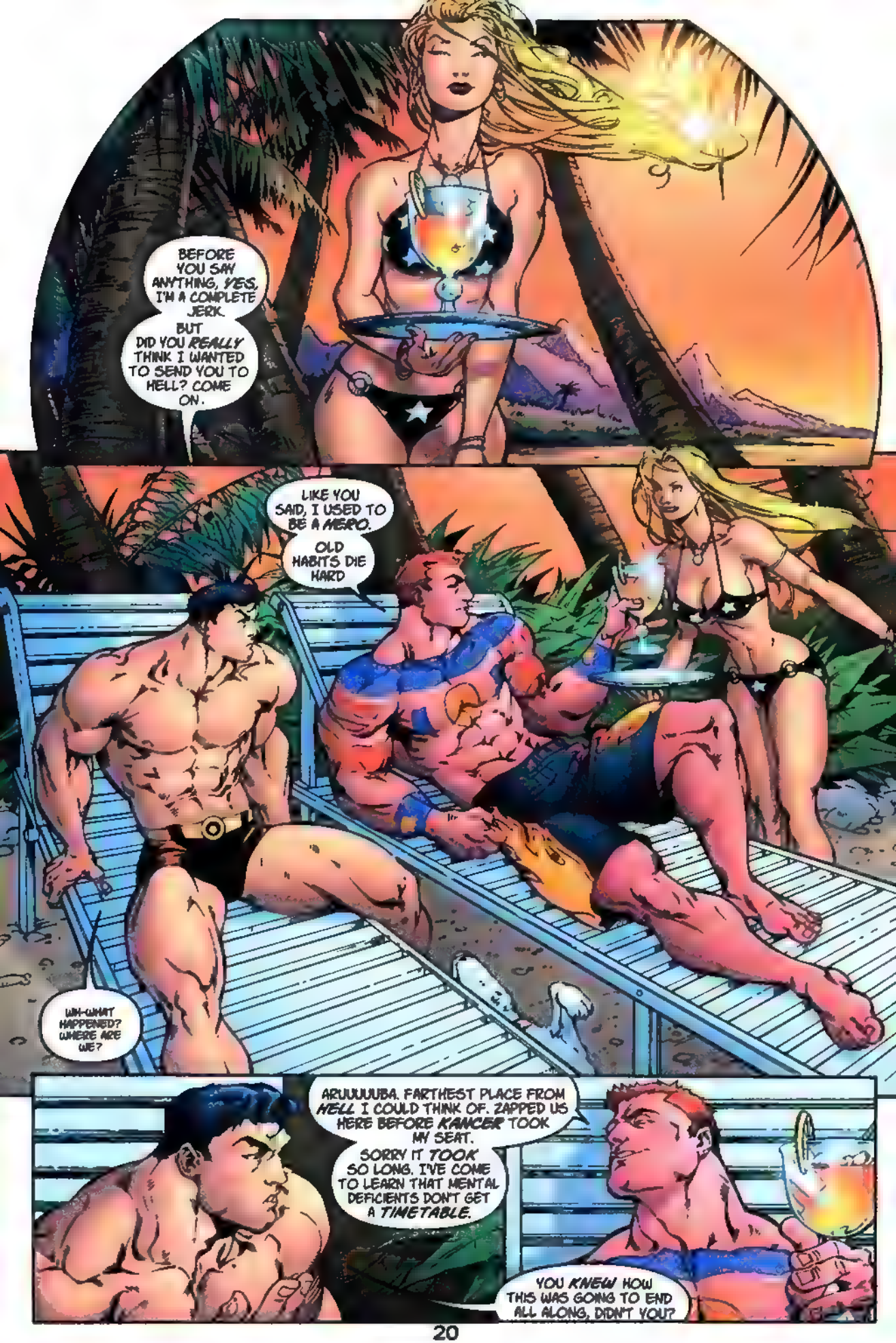
YOU CAN MAKE HIM GO AWAY. THE THING YOU FEAR MORE THAN ANYONE YOU'VE EVER MET. GONE.
IT DOESN'T GET BETTER THAN THAT. CHOOSE.
KRYPTO!
NO. NO ONE DIES


MRRF
Y-YOU... YOU CHOOSSSSSE TO LET ME... LIVVVVE?
PWHEW! THAT WAS CLOSE, HUH? THE A.S.P.C.A. WOULD HAVE BEEN ALL OVER YOU FOR DOG FIGHTING.
CAN'T SAY I'M SURPRISED. YOU'VE GOT THE WORST CASE OF JEWISH GUILT EVER --
SHUT UP.
GIVES HISSSS LIFE... FOR MINNNE?
THIS HAD BETTER BE LEGIT, GARDNER, OR I SWEAR I WILL HUNT YOU TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.
SPOKEN LIKE A TRUE TOOL OF SATAN! BULLY FOR YOU!
WHINNNE
S'OKAY, BOY. YOU GO HOME. TAKE CARE OF LOIS.
WHAT LIFE... GIVESSSS ZOD?

HNNGH!
NO, I CHOOSE. I CHOOSE MY LIFFFFE!
HFF.
GET AWAY FROM THE THRONE!
EASY, BIG BOY.
THIS IS ALL PLAYING OUT TO SCRIPT, TRUST ME.
YOU SAVED MY LIFFFFE, FATHERRR! YOU CARRRRE! EVEN IF YOU CANNOT SSSSHOW -- YOU CARE!
I WILL MAKE YOU CARE MORE!
I WILL TAKE HIS PLACE FOR YOU!
NO! THIS WAS NOT WHAT I WANTED! GET UP! GET --
THWIPPPTH
THWIP
FATHERRRR!

GOOD GOD, NO...
REMEMBER ME, FATHER! REMEMBER YOUR MONSSSSSTER! WHAT I HAVE DONE FOR YOU! FOR WHEN I RETURN --
KRRRMMMBL!
-- YOU WILL ACCEPT ME AS... KIN!
NO! NO!
DONE AND DONE!
NOW BEAM ME UP, SCOTTY
SCHWAAA

GONE... GONE WITH KANCER.
AND SO, THE FIRST CASUALTY OF THE WAR BETWEEN US... FALLS, SUPERMAN
THE LESSON
PUT NO FAITH IN MONSTERS...
"...LEST THEY BE OF YOUR OWN BLOOD."


BEFORE YOU SAW ANYTHING, YES, I'M A COMPLETE JERK. BUT DID YOU REALLY THINK I WANTED TO SEND YOU TO HELL? COME ON.
LIKE YOU SAID, I USED TO BE A HERO.
OLD HABITS DIE HARD
UH-WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE ARE WE?
ARUUUUUBA. FARTHEST PLACE FROM HELL I COULD THINK OF. ZAPPED US HERE BEFORE KANCER TOOK MY SEAT.
SORRY IT TOOK SO LONG. I'VE COME TO LEARN THAT MENTAL DEFICIENTS DON'T GET A TIMETABLE.
YOU KNEW HOW THIS WAS GOING TO END ALL ALONG, DIDN'T YOU?

NOT FOR NOTHING, BUT MONSTER HANGNAIL OR NOT, ONCE YOU MURDER A COUPLE OF FIFTY PEOPLE TO GET YOUR "FATHERS'S" ATTENTION, YOU'RE HEADED DOWNSTAIRS REGARDLESS. HIS SICK LOVE THING FOR YOU WASN'T GOING TO SAVE HIS SOUL.
WAY I LOOK AT IT, HE GOT A CHANCE TO REDEEM HIMSELF, AT LEAST IN HIS OWN MIND --
YOU'RE SICK.
NO. I'M THE GUY WHO DIED PLAYING THE GAME YOUR WAY, AND DIDN'T EVEN GET A GRAVESTONE AS THANKS FOR IT. AND YOU KNOW WHAT?
THAT'S FINE BY ME, BECAUSE NOW I KNOW HOW THE WORLD REALLY WORKS...
SOMEONE HAS TO BE THE GARBAGE MAN FOR YOU PEOPLE, AND GUESS WHO JUST GOT HIRED.
DON'T THANK ME... JUST STAY OUT OF MY YARD, AND I'LL STAY OUT OF YOURS...
UNTIL YOU MESS UP AGAIN, OF COURSE.
THIS ISN'T OVER.
IT NEVER IS FOR GUYS LIKE US. HERE'S TO KICKING YOUR BUTT AGAIN SOON.
HEY, AND ONE MORE THING --
-- ENOUGH WITH ALL THIS MOPING AND BEING WORRIED ABOUT ZOD AND PSYCHO LIZARDS AND WHINE WHINE WHINE!
YOU'RE SUPERMAN! ACT LIKE IT!

UP UP AND AWAY...
AND SO GOES A LITTLE PIECE OF MY SOUL.
HAVING DOUBTS? SECOND THOUGHTS?
NAH. WHAT'S DONE IS DONE, AND I'M GONNA DO A LOT BETTER OUT HERE THAN I WAS DOWN THERE.
ARE YOU DONE WITH MY GIFT?
WORKED LIKE A CHARM... COULDN'T HAVE SENT KANCER INTO THIS MESS WITHOUT IT.
SEE? NEW POWERS AND EVERYTHING. POOF! I'M ON TOP OF THE WORLD.
JUST... SORTA WISH IT WASN'T HIM, Y'KNOW? OF ALL OF US, HE'S THE ONE WHO MOST BELIEVES THIS JUNK.
FACT IS, I WOULDN'TA EVEN TAKEN YOUR LITTLE TOY HERE IF I THOUGHT YOU COULD DO HIM ANY HARM.
OH? REALLY... HE MEANS THAT MUCH TO YOU?
NOT JUST ME... TO THE WORLD. BUT HEY, IF YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE HIM DOWN A PEG, GO FOR IT. I'M A FREE MAN, AND NOW I'M GOING TO FIND LARGE WOMEN WHO CAN HURT ME AND INSULT THEM UNTIL THEY DO.
THEN, I THINK I'LL TAKE A NAP.
I EVER SEE YOU AGAIN, I'LL KILL YOU. HAVE A NICE DAY.
THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT I PLAN TO DO, MISTER GARDNER. EXACTLY.
THE END?

ACTION RE

Dear Re:Action:

ACTION COMICS #786 was a tight story with great art. It's stories like this one that made me fall in love with comics in the first place. If only every issue could be like this one. Ferry drew crisp, clean and attractive. Kelly wrote a classic. Together they put together an issue that should be remembered. The best part is Superman taking a beating because it's what he does. He helps people at any cost. Seeing Superman standing up for life and saving lives is what makes him great. If they want a darker hero who bends the rules, they should look at DC's other heroes like Green Arrow or Batman. I look forward to next month.

DAVE BRAY
FERNDALE, MI
HMBRAY72@JUNO.COM

We look forward to you. And thanks. We make a concerted effort to show that Superman always tries to do the right thing in the name of justice.

Hi, Super-creators:

Plain and simple: don't care for the new logo. Why can't we just agree that the original ACTION logo is magnificent and needs no "modernization"? Some things should not be touched, and the ACTION COMICS logo is one of them.

JEFF DYER
DUBUQUE, IA

Sorta agree with you, Jeff. The original ACTION logo is very cool, but that's not what was on the book. It has already been "modernized." When we were doing this new one we really did try to bring back the original, but it didn't work. What's on now does use the last version of the logo in a different manner, so you sorta gotta like it, huh?

Re:Action:

I absolutely loved Superman's trip to Japan!!! I'm a big fan of Asia and love reading stories about it. Anything with Japan in it, I'll probably get!

I loved the villians in issue #787. They look so cool and have such neat powers. Have them return someday.

I am one happy customer. I am certainly looking forward to the conclusion of this story!

ERIK HOLLENDER
WINTHROP, MA

Glad to have made you so happy. By now you've read the tragic second part, but the story of Byakko and Gunshin is not yet over.

Dear Actioneers:

"I don't want to imagine what would happen if we had freaks running around *Tokyo*, like they do *Metropolis*." — Tokyo Police Officer Eng, from ACTION COMICS #787.

Hmmm... is this a case of the pot calling the kettle "a wok"? Seems to me that great beasts were rampaging across Tokyo long before Doomsday, Mongul, and Brainiac ever found their way to Metropolis. If I were Clark, I would have been biting my lip... or one of those little squirmy things that passed for lunch!

As for me, I'm off with Jimmy to find a McDonalds...

JOE TORCIVIA
WESTBURY, NY

Great beasts are one thing, costumed metas are another, so cut officer Eng some slack. But the Pandora's box has been opened on DCU Japan's metas now, and the whole point may be moot.

Dear Re:Action:

When is it going to happen?! General Zod is back, so we hope, and this will lead to some very interesting storylines. I have faith in the Superman team and as a faithful fan, I know that this will be interesting!

MATTHEW
BURTONMT@AOL.COM

When the final showdown goes down, you can be sure it will be a bloody battle in these pages.

—Eddie Berganza
"Call him the General."

NEXT WEEK:

In SUPERMAN #182 Lois begins her investigation of President Luthor aided by Jeph Loeb, Ed McGuinness and Cam Smith.

NEXT MONTH:

In ACTION #791 it's a tragic story from Smallville's past by guest writer Ben Raab with Derec Aucoin art.

Someone get Krypto a Scooby snack for this intense cover by Duncan Rouleau and Marlo Alquiza with the colors of Tanya and Richard Horie.

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"...AND SCANNING FOR ALL!"
BeastCharming:
Not quite Big Blue,
but he's halfway there!